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a casing enclosing the impeller and having a fluid inlet and a single fluid outlet separated by a stripper, the casing having axially spaced, radially extending first and second side walls, said first and second side walls facing said first and second surfaces of said impeller, respectively;

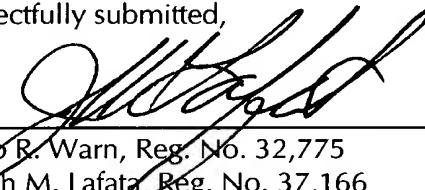
axially and radially extending blade means formed on an outer radial periphery of said impeller for driving fluid from said inlet toward said outlet as said impeller rotates about said axis of rotation; and

a generally ring shaped side channel portion formed in at least one of said first and second side walls of said casing for defining a flow path between said fluid inlet and said single fluid outlet, and said side channel portion tapering axially inward along substantially all of its length toward said impeller from said fluid inlet to said single fluid outlet for directing fluid back into contact with said blade means as said impeller rotates.

REMARKS

Applicants are amending the claims of the subject application to distinguish the present invention from the prior art. Bases for these amendments is found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed and as such, no new matter has been added. If the Examiner should have any questions, he or she is encouraged to contact the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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